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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICA POLITICAL NEWSLETTER JANUARY 19-JANUARY 22

REF: Pretoria 0080

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11. (SBU) This was written in partnership with the Open Source Center's Pretoria Bureau. The newsletter is open to contributions from officers in the Embassy or in the Consulates who wish to highlight political trends. Contact Madeline Seidenstricker or Jonathan Smallridge for more information, or to make contributions. The newsletter also is available on the Political Section's blog, "A View from South Africa," found on intelink.gov.

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Domestic News  
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Advocate Gives Rationale for Pursuing Reparations on Behalf of  
Apartheid Victims

12. (SBU) Radio 702 announcer Redi Direko on January 19 interviewed a former commissioner in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), Advocate Dumisa Ntsebeza, who along with Khulumani Support Group, brought the apartheid lawsuits against some multinational companies in a U.S. court. Ntsebeza dismissed the argument that the claims were "dealt with" through the TRC. He added that in the 2003 post-amnesty applications handed to the South African president there were indications of "complicity by the corporations in the perpetration of those violations of human rights." He rejected the argument by Professor Kader Asmal that the reparations case should not be heard in New York as "this is a domestic issue." Ntsebeza said the companies were not being sued for merely having done business in South Africa, but because "they aided and abetted" in the violation of human rights and perpetration of those kind of crimes. [Johannesburg Radio 702 in English - privately-owned commercial radio station]

Director of Public Prosecutions Tightens Policy on Media  
Interaction

13. (SBU) New National Director of Public Prosecutions (NDPP) Menzi Simelane has forbidden prosecutors from speaking to the media without prior authorization, according to Simelane's spokesperson Bulelwa Makeke. The South African Press Agency reported on January 21 that the new directive was effective "immediately as an amendment to our current media policy." Makeke explained that the National Prosecuting Authority (NPA) has had "many issues" as a result of prosecutors talking to the press. She said, "We are not saying they cannot talk," but that "there are always things you can and cannot say." Opposition Democratic Alliance justice spokeswoman Dene Smuts said it was hard to imagine "a more inappropriate choice for NDPP than Mr. Simelane," and that it was difficult to think of a "more unfortunate public relations approach than that he has now taken, given the widespread view that he tried to turn the NPA into an instrument of government while he was Director General, and that he will continue to do so as NDPP." [Johannesburg SAPA in English -

cooperative, nonprofit national news agency; URL:  
<http://www.sapa.org.za>

#### Democratic Alliance Slams Ruling Party Financial Interest in New Power Stations

14. (SBU) African National Congress (ANC) Secretary General Gwede Mantashe said "political parties had to take the initiative to raise money for themselves," dismissing attacks on the ANC for holding shares in a company benefitting from Eskom contracts to build two power stations. The ANC admitted that its investment arm, Chancellor House, still held a 25 percent stake in Hitachi South Africa - the company building the new power stations. Business Report said on January 20 that a statement from the Democratic Alliance said the ANC would benefit from a deal worth millions of dollars. "With the ANC's stake in Hitachi, it is only reasonable to believe that steep electricity price increases by Eskom will benefit the ANC's party coffers," party MP Sej Motau said. [Online news service of the South African Broadcasting Corporation; nominally independent but partially funded by government; <http://www.sabcnews.com>; Website of business and financial publication, privately owned by Independent Newspaper Company; URL: <http://www.businessreport.co.za/>]

#### Growing Concern Over Potential South African Ambassador to Uganda

15. (SBU) Gay rights activists and opposition parties across the country have urged President Jacob Zuma not to appoint columnist Jon Qwelane as South Africa's ambassador to Uganda because of his outspoken published remarks against homosexuals. Uganda currently is under international pressure to withdraw a bill that would impose the death penalty for homosexual acts. Qwelane is a veteran journalist and was a vocal supporter of Zuma when the ANC leader battled fraud and corruption charges. (IOL, January 19)

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#### Ministry of Defense Receives Recommendations on Military Veterans

16. (SBU) Minister of Defense and Veterans Affairs Lindiwe Sisulu received a report on the plight of, and the state's obligations toward, military veterans on January 19. The report follows the reconfiguration of the Ministry of Defense to include military veterans affairs. Sisulu appointed a task team to advise her and the Cabinet on how the new administration can assist or empower the military constituency. The ministerial task team undertook an analysis of various post-conflict countries which successfully integrated former opposing military factions into the mainstream of society. According to the task team, the final report consists of policy recommendations with regard to benefits such as empowerment, education and training, pension benefits, housing, and health support. The report also supports the decision to establish a separate budget vote and an accounting officer for Military Veterans Affairs. (Buanews, January 19, 2010)

#### ANC Lekgotla maps the way forward for 2010

17. (SBU) The ANC is preparing for a busy year ahead, according to comments from party leaders following its first intra-party retreat (or "lekgotla") of the year. Most importantly, the party wants to deal with socio-economic challenges facing the country as nearly a million jobs were lost as a result of economic recession. Further, tensions within the alliance are making tackling the tasks ahead more difficult. ANC Head of Policy Jeff Radebe says the party hopes branches will be "a sharp point in the spear" when dealing with service delivery. According to Mantashe, there is a need to examine the party's relationship with municipal managers and councilors. Mantashe told reporters the party will examine whether municipal managers and councilors should be deployed by the ANC or should be appointed for a permanent length of time. Following the lekgotla, the ANC distanced itself from a report written by Tokyo Sexwale on what transpired when South African Communist Party delegates booed ANC Youth League President Julius Malema in Polokwane last month. Sexwale's report, which reportedly was delivered to party leaders at

the lekgotla, is said to have blamed Mantashe for the embarrassing incident. The ANC through Mantashe, however, denied that Sexwale's report was discussed or that there was ongoing tension. (SABCNews, January 18, 2010)

#### Cabinet Lekgotla to Map Government's Program of Action

18. (SBU) A three-day Cabinet lekgotla followed the party's dialogue, bringing together all ministers, deputies ministers, premiers, and top government officials to evaluate and consolidate government's program of action for the year. According to government spokesperson Themba Maseko, the lekgotla focused on ways to improve government's performance. Maseko told reporters that Cabinet would look at ways of strengthening local governments following service delivery protests last year. The outcomes of the meeting, which Zuma chaired, are expected to form the bases of the State of the Nation Address and the state budget speech to be delivered next month. (Buanews, January 20, 2010)

#### Independent Democrats Uncover New Parliamentary Travel Scandal

19. (SBU) Independent Democrat (ID) party leader Patricia de Lille is taking legal action against parliamentary speaker Max Sisulu in a bid to force him to reveal the names of the members of Parliament who pocket thousands of dollars per month in petrol reimbursement claims. The court application comes after Sisulu refused to give De Lille the names of the legislators, saying that releasing the names would be an invasion of their privacy. Local newspapers reported three months ago that De Lille blew the whistle on a new parliamentary travel scandal involving legislators who claim large amounts of petrol costs. (Sowetan, January 21, 2010)

#### Prominent Academic Lauds Washington over Easing of Travel Restriction

110. (SBU) University of Johannesburg Deputy Vice Chancellor Adam Habib on January 21 welcomed United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's signing of orders that could end his exclusion from entry into America. Habib said the decision would make his work easier. Habib and his family were denied entry into the United States in 2006 and he subsequently filed a legal case in the United States to protest the decision. (Business Day, January 22, 2010)

#### ----- International News -----

Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Somalis "Trickling" into Zimbabwe En Route to South Africa

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111. (SBU) A January 21 report in the Zimbabwe Herald Online stated that a senior immigration officer has gone into hiding after he allegedly issued 26 Bangladeshis with visas without authority. Police have launched a manhunt for Alter Openyu Nhidza who was based at Kanyemba Border Post. It is reportedly believed that Nhidza is only one link in a syndicate that has seen Bangladeshis, Pakistanis and Somalis trickling into the country-mostly through illegal entry points-en route to South Africa. The 26 Bangladeshis with the fake visas were deported at the Harare International Airport on 18 January. They arrived separately in two groups from Kenya-18 aboard a Kenyan Airways flight and 8 on Ethiopian Airlines. A "sizeable number" of Pakistanis, Somalis, and Bangladeshis had reportedly entered Zimbabwe with the aid of rogue immigration officials. Investigations revealed that Nhidza has charged about US\$600 per "visa." [Website of pro-government newspaper published daily except Sunday; URL: <http://www.herald.co.za>]

#### South Africa Seeks to Provide Assistance to Haiti

112. (U) Department of International Relations and Cooperation Deputy Minister Sue van der Merwe announced on January 14 that South Africa would offer aid to Haiti through the National Disaster

Management Centre (NDMC). South Africa's aid assistance to Haiti is to consist of three phases. First, the government wants to provide help in the immediate search and rescue phase. Second, the government plans to help with the identification of bodies by sending forensic pathologists. Finally, the government wants to offer humanitarian aid by working with non-governmental organizations such as "The Gift of the Givers." (DIRCO Briefing, January 14)

GIPS